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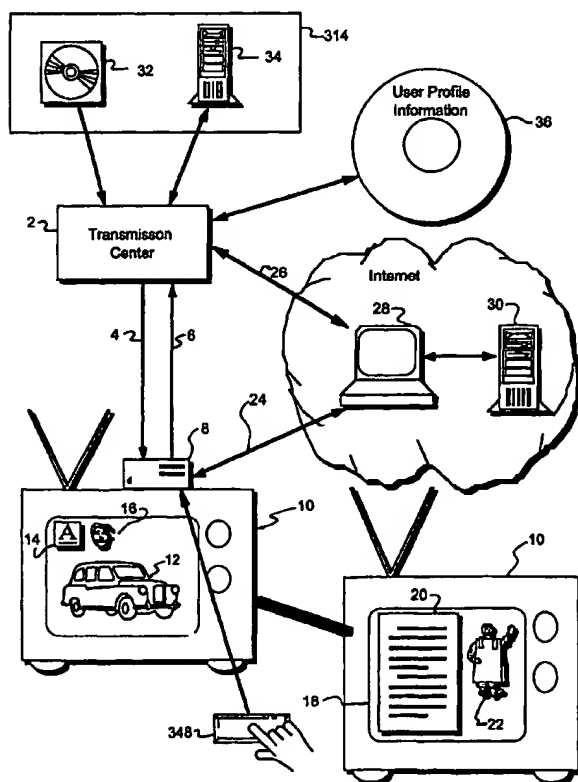
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(54) Title: SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING SALES INFORMATION VIA INTERACTIVE DIGITAL DATA STREAMS



(57) Abstract: A virtual sales agent program (18) is provided to users via the functionality of interactive television (10) programming technology, enhanced television systems which present retrieved Internet information (28) and content, and expert based programming systems. The virtual sales agent segments (18) are part of the same transmission stream (4) which broadcasts an associated commercial message. The content signals, comprising both the commercial and virtual sales agent segments, are converted into digital format for transmission. An encoder combines the various digital content signals, which may include video (22), audio, graphics, text (20), and data signals, including Uniform Resource Locators for direction to Internet content (28), into a reduced number of data streams (4) for transmission. Using a multiple-choice controller (348), a user responds to information presentations or interrogatory messages. The various information segments in the various content signals preferably relate in real-time and content so that an interactive conversation can occur as the content signal is played back and the user responds.

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